



January 1, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

DEPARTMENT OF THEATER
102 EAST MELNITZ HALL
BOX 951622
LOS ANGELES, CA 90095-1622

I am pleased to write in support of Penny McDonald, whom I have known for the past eight years as a remarkably gifted Alexander Technique teacher and theater artist. I've been teaching Acting, Physical Performance, and the Alexander Technique at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television since 1988, and at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music since 1994. I have applied the principles of the Alexander Technique and integrated different acting methodologies to professional projects in the film industry and theatre in Los Angeles and around the world.

I met Penny in 2011, as we were planning a new acting school in Melbourne with the Howard Fine Acting Studio. I've been teaching as part of the faculty at the Studio in Los Angeles since 1994, and we were eager to extend our program to Australia. This program was ground breaking because it was based on the teachings of Uta Hagen, who had personally trained and influenced the whole faculty as well as integrating the principles of the Alexander Technique as applied to performance. From the very start, I was impressed with Penny's extraordinary ability in coordinating and supporting me during my first visit in Melbourne and Sydney. What made Penny a remarkable collaborator was her hunger and curiosity for learning new ways to teach, her clarity of thought and observation, and her willingness to explore the unknown. I found Penny's openness to new experience rather disarming, and it gave me a sense of trust personally and professionally which keeps growing to this day.

For the past twenty years Penny has taught at the Australian National Academy of Music, National Theatre Drama School, VCA, Howard Fine Acting Studio, 16th Street Acting Studio, Film & TV Studio and Brave Studios and The Space Dance Studio. Performers at these institutions learn the skills to recognize and be curious about the tension in their bodies, and more importantly learn the skills to invite change in this tension. They learn to find freedom in their bodies and breath, so that their performance is connected and authentic. Penny also has successfully conducted many introductory workshops at TAFE and secondary institutions, and is a regular guest teacher at the Alexander Teacher Training School The School for F. M. Alexander Studies.

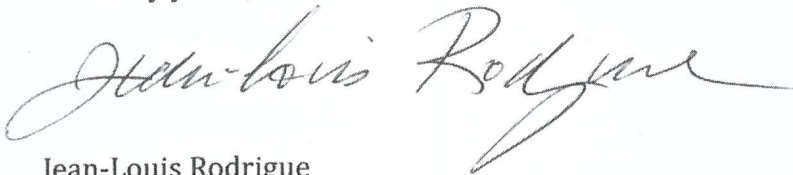
During my annual visits to Australia, I've spent three-weeks teaching master classes to the Full Time students, Intensive workshops for outside students, and a series of private sessions for individual artists. In Sydney, I presented three-day workshops as well as presenting master classes for full-time students at NIDA. Besides attending every class I have taught in Melbourne, and taking copious notes of my

Penny assisted me in teaching the large groups of students, and I was able to personally witness her teaching. She immediately created a sense of calmness in the students, and helped them to enter a new state of profound learning. I also had the pleasure of exchanging Alexander work during our private sessions together, which gave me a clear and direct way to know her embodiment of the Alexander Technique in her own use of herself. She was extremely effective in teaching the Alexander Technique for performers; she is uncommonly sensitive and empathetic to the needs of actors. She has a profound understanding and feeling of the relationship between the ideals of the Alexander Technique and its potential impact on the way a performer communicates his or her art form.

There are very few Alexander Technique teachers who are also performers, and have the practical understanding of the needs of performers. Penny knows how to successfully and effectively bridge and apply the principles of the Alexander Technique, and other performance methodologies to the needs of the play or piece of music. She is able to serve the playwright, composer, character, the relationship between the director and the actors, and ultimately serve the audience.

Beyond her extraordinary professional qualifications and accomplishments, I want to emphasize Penny's very special human qualities which, when added to her expertise and artistry, make for a magical combination that is both inspiring and reassuring. I know that she will be an enormous asset to your student body, your school, and performance center. I hope you will give her every consideration and if I can provide you with further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jean-Louis Rodrigue". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jean-Louis Rodrigue
Movement Director
Associate Professor
UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television
jlrodrigue@tft.ucla.edu
310-617-2082 direct line